



CRUISING THROUGH RETIREMENT?

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A few retirees from U.S. foreign affairs agencies have cleverly found short-term “employment” aboard cruise ships. We contacted some of their employers for more information and the two articles that follow are the result. Both companies are booking agents for cruise ship entertainment and both have provided us with excellent information.



“Mother, mother ocean,
I have heard you call
Wanted to sail upon your waters
since I was three feet tall”

*- from “A Pirate Looks at Forty”
by Jimmy Buffett*



CRUISE SHIP LECTURING... THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE

- Prepared by Lynda Davey, Vice President, Sixth Star Entertainment & Marketing

Based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Sixth Star Entertainment & Marketing is the largest supplier of enrichment programs in the cruise industry with ten cruise line clients and 60+ ships. Following are excerpts from the company’s Manual for Success, which is given to cruise lecturers in advance of their assignments to help prepare them for the fascinating journey ahead.

Sixth Star is currently booking Destination and World Affairs speakers on top cruise lines, including Radisson Seven Seas Cruises, Silversea Cruises, Celebrity Cruises, Princess Cruises, Orient Lines, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, and more. To learn more about lecturing opportunities, or to apply with Sixth Star online, visit www.sixthstar.com or call Sixth Star at 954-462-6760.

About Being “Enrichment Staff”

All Guest Lecturers booked on short-term cruise assignments fall under the category of Enrichment Staff.

Enrichment Staff are not employees of Sixth Star, or the cruise line, and are not considered “crew members.” While Enrichment Staff are included on the passenger manifest and enjoy full passenger status, they are not technically “passengers,” as passengers have to pay full price for their cruise.

So, as Enrichment Staff, you’re probably wondering, “Where do I fit in?” Good question. Enrichment Staff exist in a bit of a gray area...you’re not crew, but not passengers. That said, this gray area is one of the best travel deals afloat. In exchange for sharing your programs several times throughout the voyage, you will enjoy a cruise for two and all the onboard food, entertainment and activities for a small fraction of the cost that passengers pay. However, please note that due to this unique role,

it's important that full-fare passengers always "come first" around the ship.

Although you are part of the ship's entertainment department, Enrichment Staff are especially fortunate because this position has more privileges than almost every other crew position on board. Enrichment Staff are berthed in passenger accommodations and are able to enjoy all of the amenities reserved for guests, with the exception of gambling on most lines.

*"I was feelin' the blues
I was watching the news
When this fella came on the tv
He said I'm telling you
That science has proven
That heartaches are
healed by the sea"*

- From
"Two Pina Coladas"
by Garth Brooks



Becoming Part of the Cruise Team

It is important to note that you will not be an "island" in your role aboard ship. You will be an integral part of the ship's Entertainment Department during your time onboard. Each and every member of the department – whether they are a full-time staffer or a temporary guest expert such as yourself – plays a key role in the overall success of the cruise.

Scheduling

Typically, enrichment lectures take place on days the ship is at sea. Enrichment programs are generally not scheduled during port calls because passengers choose to spend these days on tours exploring the sights ashore. This allows you ample time to explore those sights as well. Please note that if your cruise features a block of several port days in a row, there is a possibility that you may be called upon by the Cruise Director to conduct a program on a port day afternoon prior to the ship's departure.

Presentation Time

*** Number of presentations** – As a general rule, enrichment speakers deliver three to four presentations per week – one on each day the ship is at sea. For example, a seven-day voyage usually has about three full sea days. Therefore, you would be asked to give three original presentations during the cruise and have a fourth ready to go if needed. In addition to these presentations, your main responsibility is to be sociable with passengers and to enrich their cruise experience. One special way to share your expertise in a social setting is for destination experts to position themselves outside on deck during scenic cruising, sharing knowledge with passengers.

*** Timing** – Guest speakers should offer presentations that are approximately 35 to 40 minutes in length, with 10 - 15 minutes at the end for questions and answers.

*** Technical Capabilities** – For the most part, cruise ships have all of the modern technical equipment needed to present a multi-media lecture. This includes LCD projectors for PowerPoint, DVD, VHS, lavalier mics, podium, etc. Your Sixth Star account manager will send your technical needs to the cruise line prior to your voyage, but it's always wise to go over your requirements with the Cruise Director or a member of his/her staff after boarding the vessel. A member of the ship's technical staff will set everything up for you before each presentation.

*** Presentation Venue** – Shipboard lectures normally take place in a mini-auditorium, a theater setting or one of the vessel’s bars or lounges which holds around 150-200 guests. If the audience becomes too large for the venue, the Cruise Director may move the lecturer into a show lounge to accommodate more guests. A stage may be located at the front of the room for maximum exposure.

Being Successful

“Success” in the world of cruise line entertainment and enrichment is usually defined by a number – a score compiled from passenger questionnaires that are distributed by the cruise line towards the end of each and every sailing. Your name and position may be included in this questionnaire, and passengers will rate you as excellent, good, fair or poor. We also receive important feedback from Cruise Directors regarding your professionalism, preparedness, cooperation and attitude. As cruise lines strive for excellence in passenger satisfaction, only those who receive a top score and excellent feedback will be allowed to return for future engagements.

The Power of “Edu-tainment”

One thing to always keep in mind as you prepare for your assignment as a shipboard presenter is that your audience is on VACATION. While there are a growing number of passengers who want to be enriched during their cruise, you will lose them if you are unprepared to “wow” them on stage. Presentations that are unprofessional, dry and overly academic are sure to fail.

At Sixth Star, we preach the power of “Edu-tainment.” The most successful cruise ship speakers and presenters – the ones that consistently receive high ratings and are always welcome to return – deliver presentations that are both educating AND entertaining. Guests on a cruise ship are looking for a unique and dynamic experience that will enrich their lives.



LECTURING ON CRUISE SHIPS

- Submitted by Tim Castle & Associates

Many cruise ships, especially those operated by the luxury lines, offer enrichment lectures as part of their daytime activities. Presented by professionals, academics, and other experts who are also gifted speakers, the lectures cover cruise destinations, world affairs, the media, and a wide variety of other topics of interest to a general audience.

The Agreement with the Cruise Line

In return for their lecture presentations, speakers receive a free cruise, together with other considerations that vary from line to line. For example, in exchange for a series of different 40-minute lectures, calculated at two per week, Crystal Cruises offers:

- Accommodation for the lecturer and a companion in a deluxe outside stateroom.
- All meals and entertainment while on board.
- A 50% discount on bar and wine purchases (applicable up to \$75 per item).

- If a lecturer is taking two or more sequential cruises: round-trip economy air and airport/ship/airport transfers for the lecturer only.

Booking with Tim Castle & Associates

Most cruise lecturers secure their bookings through specialized agencies, which generally charge the lecturer a booking fee of \$50 - \$100 per cruise day (which covers both the lecturer and a companion).

Tim Castle & Associates provides lecturers for most sailings of Crystal Cruises and Holland America Line and, on a more limited basis, for Cunard Line and Seabourn Cruise Line.

Crystal Cruises, which for ten years has been rated the best large-ship cruise line by the readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* and *Travel + Leisure*, owns two luxury vessels: the 50,000-ton, 940-guest *Crystal Symphony* and the 68,000-ton, 1,080-guest *Crystal Serenity*.

Cunard Line owns “The Most Famous Ocean Liners in the World” – the legendary 70,300-ton, 1,790-passenger *Queen Elizabeth 2 (QE2)* and the new 151,400-ton, 2,620-passenger *Queen Mary 2 (QM2)*.

Holland America Line, which celebrated its 130th anniversary in 2003, offers a variety of worldwide itineraries aboard its 13-ship fleet.

Promising “Intimate Ships. Uncompromising Luxury”, Seabourn Cruise Line owns three identical, award-winning yachts: *Seabourn Pride*, *Seabourn Spirit*, and *Seabourn Legend*, each of 10,000 tons with a capacity of just 208 guests.

We charge lecturers a booking fee of \$50 per cruise day, which covers both the lecturer and a companion. The brochure fares for paying guests in similar cabins average \$500 per day per person and range from about \$200 to \$875.

What Makes a Successful Cruise Lecturer?

The cruise lines have identified a number of key success factors for lecturers:

Lectures should be serious, but not heavy: guests do not want to be lectured to, but they do want to be informed. The emphasis is on what might best be called infotainment rather than education, on telling an interesting story rather than delivering dry facts.

Your lecture topics should be easily followed by a general audience. Guests on luxury cruises are usually highly educated, but no special subject knowledge should be assumed.

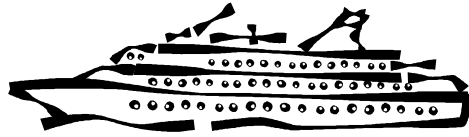
Most lectures will be enhanced by the use of visuals. PowerPoint, DVD, and other digital media are highly effective components of a good presentation.

Your presentations should appear extemporaneous and be enthusiastic, without reliance on a text or detailed notes. Involving the audience, through occasional Q&As or other mechanisms, is an excellent tool for success.

A ship is a very social environment, and guests especially like to meet the people who are there to

enrich their cruise experience. Therefore, it's important that you and your companion enjoy being approachable and sociable.

Most cruise lines have a questionnaire rating system. Lecturers who do not receive a specified minimum grade from the guests will not be invited back.



Ready to Set Sail?

If you would like to lecture aboard a cruise, please send us the following items.

By email:

- A brief biography of about 150 words, written for a non-specialist reader.
- A summary of topics and/or destinations that you can present effectively. Sample titles are also welcome: a major means of attracting and retaining attendees, they should not be overly dry or academic.

By regular mail:

- A video (standard ½-inch VHS) or DVD of you giving a presentation of general interest to a live audience. A full lecture is preferred; otherwise a five- to ten-minute segment. Alternatively, please direct me to a web site where I can download a lecture on video.

Not everyone will be selected, and in some cases there may be delays in responding due to the requirements of matching candidates with specific cruises.

We provide attentive, individualized service, and look forward to hearing from you.

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